tonne throughout the country from 10.6.1994 since it is a controlled item. Prices of phosphatic and pottasic fertilizers have been decontrolled and Government of India has no control over their prices. As in the past, the State Governments were requested to negotiate prices with the concerned agencies. Accordingly, most of the State Governments have already announced Maximum Retail Prices for these decontrolled fertilizers for Rabi 1996-97.

[Translation]

Collection of Electricity and Water Charges in N.D.M.C.

2580. SHRI UTTAMSINGH PAWAR : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the contract for collection of electricity and water charges in N.D.M.C. was given in 1995 to the Software Consultants Private Limited without inviting the tenders;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether past performance of the said firm specially the verification of the deposits of the collection amount on time in N.D.M.C. was taken into account before renewal of the said contract; and

(d) if so, the details of the performance of the said firm in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. The NDMC had considered it more appropriate to extend the contract with the firm in question rather than to select a new party after inviting tenders ostensibly on the ground that there would be considerable time gap between the date of award of contract and operationalisation of the system by a new party which might lead to loss of revenue because of delay in billing and collection of electricity and water charges.

(c) and (d). The past performance of the firm in question was considered to be satisfactory but this assessment was made by NDMC without verifying whether the cash actually collected from the consumers was being deposited in full by the party.

Prices of Essential Commodities

2581. JUSTICE GUMAN MAL LODHA
SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ
SHRI GANGA RAM KOLI
SHRI SUSHIL CHANDRA

Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the retail consumer prices of the wheat flour and other essential commodities are increasing in the open market day by day;

(b) if so, the retail prices of the consumer items during each of the last three months, item-wise;

(c) the reasons for increasing prices of essential commodities;

(d) whether the support prices of these consumer items are far less than their selling prices;

(e) the details in this regard and the reasons therefor; and

(f) the steps taken by the Government to check such price rise?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) and (b). A Statement showing the retail prices of wheat flour and other selected essential commodities for the last three months at the four major cities in the country is given in Annexure.

(c) The increase in the prices of essential commodities can be attributed to factors such as the gap in the demand and supply of these commodities due to increase in population, increase in the Minimum Support Prices paid to farmers, and rise in the cost of inputs, particularly the transportation cost on account of the recent hike in the prices of petroleum products.

(d) and (e). The Minimum Support Prices of procurement of foodgrains during 1996-97 fixed by Government are given below :

(Rs. per Qtl.)

	Item	Procurement/Support Prices (1996-97)
1	Paddy	
	(a) Common	Rs. 380
	(b) Fine	Rs. 395
	(c) Super Fine	Rs. 415
2	Wheat	Rs. 380
3	Coarse Grains	
	(a) Barley	Rs. 295
	(b) Maize	Rs. 320
	(c) Jowar, Bajra, Ragi and Barley	Rs. 310

The Support Prices are in the nature of minimum remunerative prices payable to farmers in the case of market prices falling below them so as to protect the income of farmers. The variability in the market prices is influenced, inter-alia, by the overall demand for that commodity, its production and other normal market conditions.

(f) Government has accorded the highest priority to the control of prices of essential commodities. Apart

from certain long term measures to increase the production of essential goods, imports under Open General Licence (OGL) of items which are in short supply like edible oils and pulses are encouraged to augment the total availability of these items. Some of the commodities are also supplied through the Public Distribution System and Cooperative Stores at below market prices. State/UT Governments have been requested to take stringent action against hoarders and black marketeers and others indulging in unfair trade practices under the Essential Commodities Act and Prevention of Black Marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act etc

STATEMENT

Month-end Retail Prices of Essential Commodities at selected Centres

	25.9.96	30.10.96	29.11.96
	1	2	3
Atta*			
Delhi	7.50	7.50	8.00
Pune	12.00	12.00	12.00
Calcuta	9.00	7.00	7.00
Coimbatore	10.25	10.25	10.50
Rice			
Delhi	11.00	11.00	11.50
Mumbai	9.00	9.50	10.00
Calcutta	10.00	10.00	10.00
Madras	9.40	10.00	11.00
Wheat			
Delhi	6.00	6.50	6.00
Mumbai	7.50	8.00	8.50
Calcutta	6.00	6.00	6.00
Madras	10.00	11.00	11.00
Gram			
Delhi	16.00	16.00	17.00
Mumbai	18.00	17.00	17.00
Calcutta	18.00	18.00	18.00
Madras	16.20	17.00	17.00
Tur			
Delhi	30.00	28.00	30.00
Mumbai	32.00	30.00	28.00
Calcutta	32.00	31.00	32.00
Madras	31.00	32.00	34.00
Sugar			
Delhi	15.50	15.00	15.00
Mumbai	14.60	13.90	13.50
Calcutta	16.00	15.50	15.50
Madras	13.20	13.00	13.00
Groundnut Oil			
Delhi	50.00	50.00	50.00
Mumbai**	46.00	44.00	40.00
Calcutta**	56.00	56.00	56.00
Madras	43.00	41.00	40.00
Mustard Oil			
Delhi	40.00	40.00	40.00
Mumbai	38.00	40.00	38.00
Calcutta	38.00	38.00	38.00
Madras	45.00	45.00	45.00
Vanaspati			
Delhi	39.00	39.00	39.00
Mumbai	42.00	42.00	40.00
Calcutta	45.00	45.00	45.00
Madras	40.00	43.00	42.00
Tea (loose)			
Delhi	83.00	88.00	88.00
Mumbai	86.00	84.00	80.00
Calcutta	90.00	90.00	90.00
Madras	120.00	120.00	125.00
Potatoes			
Delhi	9.00	10.00	10.00
Mumbai	8.00	9.50	9.00
Calcutta	4.50	5.00	5.50
Madras	7.00	8.00	10.00
Onions			
Delhi	7.00	10.00	9.00
Mumbai	6.00	7.50	8.00
Calcutta	6.50	7.00	9.00
Madras	7.00	7.00	10.00
Salt (Packed)			
Delhi	5.00	5.00	5.50
Mumbai	5.00	6.00	5.50
Calcutta	6.00	6.00	5.00
Madras	5.00	5.00	5.00

Source: State Civil Departments

* Directorate of Economic and Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture

** Refind oil.